

Fossils coming to life in Lehi

'Landmark' museum nearing its completion

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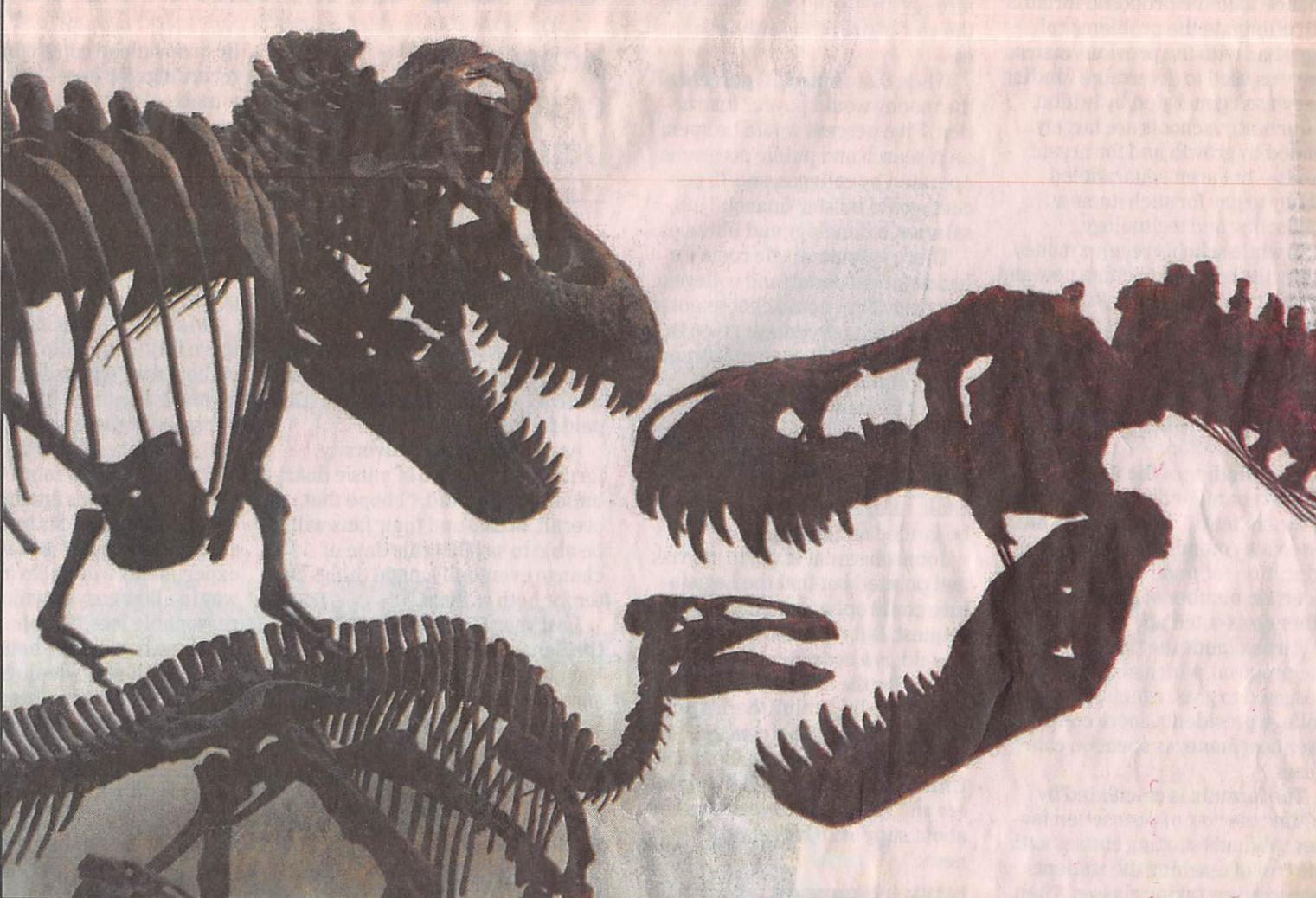
LEHI — The T-rex named Stan probably had sewer mouth.

Karen Cloward makes the observation while talking about a new exhibit at the North American Museum of Ancient Life at Thanksgiving Point, which is becoming a Utah County landmark and tourist attraction.

"It must've been terrible," said Cloward, director of exhibits and education at the museum. "You can see where the teeth dug right into the sinus cavity. He would have had raw, festering wounds. His mouth would be a sewage plant of bacteria and infection. Can you imagine the smell?"

From looking at the bones, scientists believe that every

STUART JOHNSON, DESERET NEWS



Two T-rex skeletons "fight" over an Edmontosaurus in the yet-unfinished section of the North American Museum of Ancient Life at Thanksgiving Point.

time the dinosaur snapped his powerful jaws and lunged at an attacker, his overgrown bottom teeth bit into the roof of his mouth. The pain must have been excruciating.

Those who study creatures

like Stan deduce that he likely couldn't shake off the pain. The more enraged he became, the more it hurt. The worse it hurt, the more terrible his cries, the hotter his rage.

Stan has toothmarks on his

jaws and along his face. His skull has been pierced by a baby dinosaur tooth, probably during a sibling battle in the nest, said Cloward.

"He had a rugged life," she said.

Today, two replicas of the carnivore spar in the grand hall of the museum, which is scheduled to open completely in July.

The museum has counted

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more than 165,000 visitors since it opened partially in June 2000. Museum officials predict the museum eventually will draw up to 500,000 visitors to the county each year.

And this summer, there will be much more than the T-rexes, which were created with molds from a specimen found in South Dakota's Black Hills region.

For example, in the next room, a huge Archelon sea turtle hangs from the ceiling while a Tylosaurus ripples by on its way to eat what is believed to be an ancestor of the purported Loch Ness monster, a marine reptile known as an Elasmosaur.

Nearby is a 14-foot Aepeornis that looks like a fat version of an ostrich. It died out because sailors took its eggs to show others and it couldn't reproduce quickly enough.

"For the browser, there'll be lots to explore," Cloward said. We'll have interactive exhibits, little secret views, small treasures to see."

In addition to other new attractions, a new quarry for digging has been created. Walkway ramps, which will give visitors a bird's eye view of the exhibits, are being constructed. The murals also are nearly complete.

Once complete, officials say, the museum will feature more than 100 flying reptiles and one of the largest collections of dinosaur fossils ever assembled.

More museum information is available at 766-5000 or on the Web at (www.dinosaurpoint.com).

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HOLLOW

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cross country skiing, Soldier Hollow benefits a well-balanced skier, one who can run the gamut of competition requirements ranging from aerobic training to technical skiing.

"It's a technical course — it follows the terrain," Aalberg said. "We haven't bulldozed out the course."

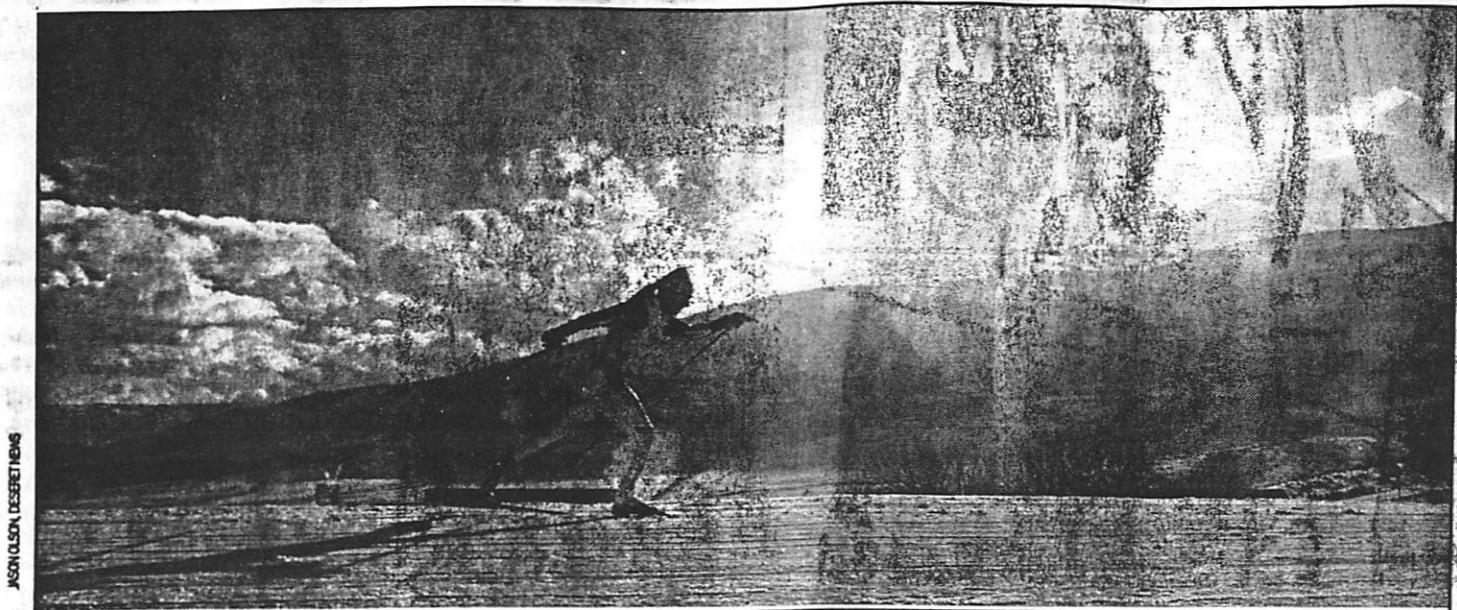
And it falls just under — by only a couple of meters — the maximum altitude allowed by FIS. The altitude allowances meant many other potential sites along the Wasatch Front — such as around Park City, where snows are much more abundant — were not feasible choices for development.

The still-up-there Soldier Hollow venue has many international skiers — particularly the Scandinavians — nervous about the Rocky Mountain highs for this week's World Cup and next year's Olympics. Remember, most of the Scandinavian countries — and much of Europe, for that matter — possess prominent stretches of seaforts.

For example, the Norwegian national Nordic team — which often trains at or near sea level — can often be found training in "nitrogen houses," which help simulate high-altitude conditions.

Another of the most noticeable differences of the Soldier Hollow site from other cross country courses throughout the world is how visible nearly all the trails are to the spectator. At other competition sites and Olympic venues, cross country skiers can be seen at the start and at the finish, with only a momentary pass or two out from wooded areas during the event.

"You can stand here and see three-quarters of the race," said Aalberg, add-



U.S. skier Wendy Kay Wagner glides during the Ladies 5K Classic race during the FIS World Cup competition at Soldier Hollow Wednesday.

ing that "you can follow the last mile of the race — it's right in front of your eyes."

And the entire 1.5-kilometer course of the sprints — a new event added to the Olympic program for the 2002 Games — will be in full view of the spectators.

Ironically, one of Soldier Hollow's perceived disadvantages by local organizers ended up aiding the sight-line advantages of the venue. The deciduous trees, such as the aspen and scrub oak, make the Wasatch Mountain State Park area a visual showcase for three seasons — spring, summer and fall.

But organizers were disappointed the leafy limbs would be long gone come time for the Winter Olympics. However, the bare branches resulted in enhanced visibility for the spectators.

"It was a disadvantage that turned into an advantage," said Nelson. "It actually opens up the view."

While the venue and the view of compe-

tition will wow the hard-core Nordic aficionados and the millions of followers throughout Europe, SLOC sports directors know they've got a tough local audience in the United States — one that eschews Nordic sports for fast-paced winter alternatives such as alpine skiing and ice hockey.

"These sports are boring if you're an American and you go to watch them," admits Lyle Nelson, SLOC's director of the Soldier Hollow venue and a four-time Olympian in biathlon, which combined rifle shooting with cross country skiing.

With their different sports backgrounds and personalities, the guarded, private Aalberg and more public-minded, outgoing Lyle Nelson have joined forces to create a rare venue, since Soldier Hollow is the first major venue to host both Olympic cross country and biathlon. Much of the operations facilities and equipment as well as the main area of spectator seating

is located in between the key locations of the two sports.

Cross country has its longer network of courses as well as its start and finish areas to the west of the competition center and stands, while biathlon has its shooting range, penalty loop and system of shorter trails on the east.

While Aalberg is focused on developing a premier Nordic course and hosting the best-ever Olympic and World Cup cross country competitions, Lyle Nelson looks at Soldier Hollow and the events as to their long-term effect on the sports.

In other words, Aalberg's dream is the best venue and best Olympics; Lyle Nelson's is for long-lasting legacy in cross country and biathlon.

"We want to make Americans aware and to invigorate these sports," Nelson said. "If we don't we may have lost our best opportunity."

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WAX

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other two waxes under extreme conditions.

"Within the various categories, there is a huge number of different waxes, ranging from a minus 20 degrees to temperatures up to 50 degrees. It's a real art these days to wax skis," adds Stowe.

Proper waxing has, in fact, passed from casual application to a science. The problem, of course, is that once out on the track there is nothing a skier can do about a bad wax job.

For freestyle or skating skis, skiers use a textured wax that is rubbed on the bases and then buffed with a cloth.

For classic or gliding skis, wax is melted onto the bases with a hot iron and then smoothed over the bases. The excess wax is scraped off and then the ski is buffed with a stiff brush or piece of steel wool to work the wax into the bases.

The better the quality of the skis, the more receptive they are to wax.

The job of waxing was expanded a few years ago when skating or freestyle skiing was introduced. For years, the classical or gliding style was all that was allowed.

Now there are two distinct events, requiring two different types of skis, and each requiring a different waxing technique.

Classic skis are usually longer, between 190 and 210 centimeters. These skis, too, may have a patterned base that allows them to glide forward easily but resist sliding backward.

The freestyle skis are shorter. They start at around 160 centimeters for women and 180 for men.

A number of ski shops offer waxing classes during the winter. REI, says Stowe, will hold three or four free classes on waxing.

And, for anyone planning a winter outing on cross country skis, what they'll find is that a good wax can make touring a whole lot easier and more fun.

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